



My Health Care Wishes: **An Advance Directive Personal & Family Manager**

What's this app all about?

My Health Care Wishes is an ABA Commission on Law and Aging smart phone app that gives individuals and their family members the ability to store their own and each other's health care advance directives, key health information, and health care contacts on their Apple or Android smartphones, and to send advance directive documents directly to health care providers by email or Bluetooth connectivity. You can learn more about the app and download it by going to www.MyHealthCareWishes.org.

Why did the ABA Commission create this app?

The ABA, particularly through its Commission on Law and Aging, has promoted health care advance planning and the use of advance directives for decades. Advance directives are documents such as a health care power of attorney or living will that can legally authorize another person to make health care decision for the individual, if the individual loses the ability to make decisions, and provide instructions for how decisions are to be made. While all adults should have an advance directive, one perennial problem they still face is ensuring that their advance directive is available and in the medical record at the time and place it actually becomes needed.

Advance directive registries have attempted to solve that problem. Many private enterprises as well as state governments have tried to develop electronic registries over the last 25 years. There are several in existence. These registries offer to keep a copy of one's advance directive and provide a digital copy of it quickly to any authorized health care providers on their request. Today, these systems are generally managed via cloud-based computing. In reality, none have ever attracted a truly critical mass of participants. The ABA Commission concluded that one of the reasons for this is that people are reluctant to give up control of such personal documents to a third party and an electronic environment they do not control.

The *My Health Care Wishes* app essentially allows individuals to create their own personal registry with content and access controlled by them. The pro or family version of the app can store and share the directives of multiple loved ones. While just about any smartphone can store a document, there is little available to make storage and sharing convenient, focused on the relevant documents and related information, organized, and truly portable electronically.

How might the app be used?

Suppose Sandra's aging father lives on the East coast and enters a hospital with a serious condition that limits his decision-making ability. But Sandra lives in the Midwest. The hospital notifies her of the admission and asks if her father had appointed a decision-maker or has an advance directive. Sandra's father did indeed create an advance directive naming Sandra as his health care agent. Sandra and her father also made use of the *My Health Care Wishes* app, so Sandra has her father's advance directive on her smartphone. She instantly emails it to the hospital. She also has stored on her app vital information about her father's medical history, physician and specialists, and his health insurance, which she is able to provide promptly, without having to search one's home files for documents and other health information and without the risk of having documents lost or misplaced. If Sandra's father had been mentally capable when he entered the hospital, he too could have provided his advance directive to the hospital through his own smartphone by email or Bluetooth connection.

The idea behind the app is very simple – to ensure that vital information that affects critical health-care decisions is controlled by the individual and by loved ones accessible at the right time and the right place when most needed. The app will be available for iPhones and Android phones and costs \$3.99 for the *pro* or family version. A *lite* version is free. Go to www.MyHealthCareWishes.org.